



*Revelation*  
*Cracking the Code*  
or  
*Why you won't be left behind!*

Week 1  
Introduction and Overview



*Introduction to this course*

- ❖ The syllabus
  - Course description
  - Our objectives
  - The class schedule
  - The book and the weekly Bible worksheets
- ❖ The index cards
- ❖ The St. Andrew Academy website
  - [www.standrewacademy.org](http://www.standrewacademy.org)
- ❖ Why are the overheads so wordy?
- ❖ How we'll learn
  - Teaching the head and forming the heart
  - Developing our Christian imagination!



## *End-times fascination*

- ❖ Second century AD
  - Montanus and his followers withdraw from the world to await the imminent advent of the New Jerusalem – what we would call the second coming. They saw themselves as the “spiritual elite” – purified and fit to be Christ’s bride.
- ❖ October 22, 1844
  - Led by William Miller, thousands of Americans eagerly anticipate Jesus’ return on Oct 22. They are disappointed, but the movement gave rise to Seventh-day Adventism.
- ❖ Premillennial dispensationalism!!
  - *The Late, Great Planet Earth* & the *Left Behind* Series
  - Premillennial – Jesus will return before (“pre”) his 1000 yr to take away the true believers.
  - Dispensationalism – World history is divided into different periods (dispensations). The key to this is a clear distinction between Israel and the Church.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Premillennial dispensationalism*

- ❖ An interpretive scheme developed by John Darby in the early 1830’s and popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible and later the Ryrie Study Bible.
- ❖ Key characteristics:
  - Prophecy is history written in advance. Prophetic passages become akin to a script that will be played out to the letter.
  - No single book contains the whole script, so various portions (fragments!) of the Bible are pulled together like a jigsaw puzzle.
  - We live in a parenthesis! Using Daniel 9:20-27 as the central guide, “p-d’s” claim that God has stopped the prophecy clock (at Jesus’ death and resurrection) with “seven seconds left in the game.” All eyes, like the *Left Behind* series, are then focused on understanding when God will restart the clock, beginning with the rapture.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *The rapture -- Where does the idea come from?*

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 (NRSV) – not Revelation!

<sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *The rapture – a surprise*

- ❖ The popularity of the “rapture” (Jesus returning to take up believers before a time of tribulation) is both recent and largely restricted to America!
  - First suggested by a Jesuit priest about 1600 – as part of the “counter-reformation”! But the idea lay dormant until it was picked up and popularized by Darby and then Scofield.
- ❖ Just as crowds went outside the city walls to welcome King Jesus and escort him into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, v. 17 can be understood as a sort of “welcoming committee” to herald the arrival of King Jesus to escort him into the New Jerusalem. As we'll see, the end of the story is about the renewal of this world – not our being whisked away somewhere else.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Where are we headed in this class?*

- ❖ Our subject is John's Revelation, his apocalypse
  - A book that appeals to our imagination
- ❖ We will strive to see how Revelation is not some bizarre appendage to the Bible, but is an integral part of the biblical story.
- ❖ We will look for links between the Old Testament and Revelation.
  - Much of Revelation only makes sense if we embed it firmly in the fabric of the OT.
  - 70% of the verses in Revelation are either quotations from the OT or allusions to it!
- ❖ We will discover that Revelation was written as a message of hope and encouragement for Christians – not to terrify them or us!!
  - Ask yourself: Could you truly scare someone into loving you?

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Our Guides (If you want more reading, I can help!)*

- ❖ Bruce Metzger, Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary; headed up the NRSV translation
- ❖ Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary
- ❖ M. Eugene Boring, Professor of New Testament at TCU's Brite Divinity School
- ❖ William Pender, Senior Pastor at Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church in South Carolina
- ❖ Michael Wilcock, vicar of St. Nicholas Church in Durham, England; formerly at Trinity College
- ❖ Craig Hill, Professor of New Testament at Wesley Theological Seminary
- ❖ Christopher Rowland, Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at The Queen's College, Oxford University
- ❖ David Aune, Professor at Loyola University, Chicago

©2003 Scott L. Engle



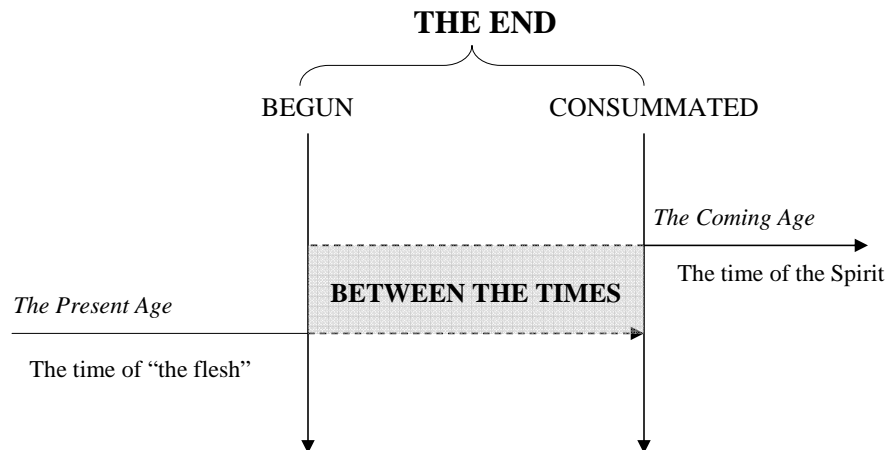
## *The Apocalyptic “worldview”*

- ❖ An apocalyptic “world-view” is central to Christianity!
  - God’s kingdom will come in all its fullness!
  - Jesus will return!
  - Evil will be defeated!
  - There will be a “new heavens and new earth”
- ❖ Jesus spoke more about the coming of God’s kingdom than about anything else!
  - We could call Jesus an apocalyptic prophet, in addition to all else he was.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Christians’ New Perspective (“already/not yet”)*



from *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, by Gordon Fee, 1996

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *What is an “apocalypse?”*

- ❖ “apocalypse” comes from the Greek for “unveiling”
- ❖ In the 200 hundreds before and after Jesus, apocalypses, as literature, were very popular!
  - Many were written; all of them shared this seemingly bizarre imagery and symbolism.
  - All of them told a story of the End! Some climactic struggle between good and evil. They shared an “apocalyptic” worldview.
  - All of them recounted visions use lots of repetition to make their points.
- ❖ But John’s Revelation is a little different
  - We have a vision of what is going on “up there” as well as “down here.”
  - No claim is made that these are visions given to Moses or Adam (no pseudonym) – but simply to “John.”

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Where else in the Bible can we find similar “apocalyptic” writing?*

- ❖ The best place to turn is the second half of Daniel – chapters 7-12. At least this part of Daniel was probably written about 150-160 years before Jesus.
  - The same wild and violent images – bizarre beasts rising out of the sea and so on.
  - The second half of Daniel tells the same “story” as the first half – but in apocalyptic language.
    - Stay true to Yahweh, even as you face persecution, and you will be vindicated. (The fiery furnace won’t burn you and the lions won’t eat you!)

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Who wrote Revelation and when?*

Not sure and not sure!!

- ❖ Is it the same John that the early church said wrote the Gospel or John's letters?
  - Maybe . . . maybe not . . . The grammar in Revelation is terrible!
- ❖ When?
  - Most scholars would see it in the 90's AD, during the reign of Domitian, an ardent persecutor of Christians.
  - But some scholars hold to an earlier date – as early as the 60's AD before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction. They place it during the reign of Nero.
- ❖ Regardless – it is in the NT canon! In the end, the early church affirmed that it is every bit as God-inspired and authoritative as Matthew or Romans.

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## *Our five-act play*

*Act One    Act Two    Act Three    Act Four    Act Five*

Creation → Fall → Israel → Jesus → The church & renewal of creation

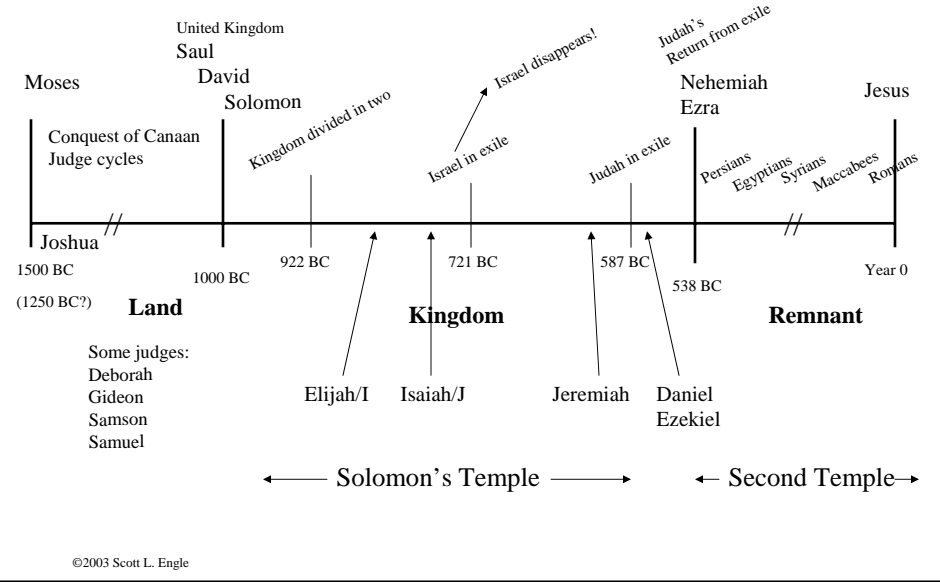
***Follow the story!***

***Where are you in the story!***

©2003 Scott L. Engle



## Old Testament Timeline



## New Testament Timeline

